DOCUMENT RESUME

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ABSTRACT

Explicit instructions are given in the described learning module on how to prepare for and conduct a successful parent-teacher conference. This report describes the contents of the module as well as the activities and resources involved in its use. Ordering information and a critique of the module are included. (JD)

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DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER IN-SERVICE EDUCATION MATERIALS

A. SUMMARY INFORMATION

Title: THE PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE

Publication Date(s): Probably 1969 since the appended articles are from publications dated 1967 and 1968

Intended Users: Teachers who want an introduction, review or additional information about techniques for successful parent-teacher conferences and whose learning style can be accomodated by a programmed text

Grade Level(s): K - 9

Number: Any number can use the product on an individual basis. A minimum of two users is required because a partner is needed at certain points.

Primary Focus: Explicit instructions are given on how to prepare for and conduct a successful parent-teacher conference.

School subject(s) and/or in-service topic(s) covered:

Teachers will examine the concept, purpose and techniques of successful parent-teacher conferences. Subtopics include identifying: a) elements of successful parent-teacher conferencing; b) situations and opening statements that are most likely to initiate rapport; c) kinds of questions that tend to open or close communication; and also the application of learned knowledge of principles of successful conferencing.

What participant does in using the materials:

The product is a programmed learning text, which provides the major instruction and guidance for use. Participants read, take results of a pre assessmentand engage in one, two or three tasks. Required and optional activities include reading articles, engaging in role play, observing or listening to a tape of a parent-teacher conference.

Resources:

The product is presented essentially in two parts--a 32-page mimeographed programmed learning text (which is required for use) and four short, xeroxed articles (which are optional readings). A partner is needed for role play and some evaluation. A tape recorder and video equipment are needed if participants engage in optional activities. A supervisor would provide further information, feedback and support.

Describer critique:

This product is recommended for teachers who are comfortable with learning through a programmed text. Material includes explicit directions, provides information in small units of instruction and reflects a definite presumption of what is absolutely right or absolutely wrong. Others may choose to read the four attached articles instead, or a combination of the two parts.

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(M) - (TS) - parent-teacher conference TD

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TS 16

1.0 PURPOSES:

The developer states: "This package attempts to give some principles, techniques and practice through simulation that will develop some awareness and competence in the art of conferencing".

2.0 CONTENT — Scope and Sequencing of Topics:

The Table of Contents for the programmed text lists these topics and in this order: Rationale for the course, Pre-requisites for the course, a Pre-Assessmnet test, three Tasks, a Post-Assessment test and an appendix. The appendix includes answers to tests and task exercises and a bibliography listing four books and two pamphlets.

Depending on results of the pre-assessment, the participant begins the course with either the first, second or third task. Each task includes a learning objective, a statement with examples for defining the objective, and an exercise to determine mastery of the task and optional activities.

TASK I is designed to enable users to identify elements of successful parent-teacher conferencing. Optional activities are to read these two of four appended articles: "Face to Face in the Parent-Teacher Conference" by Carol Le Fevre, Elementary School Journal, Oct., 1967, 7 pp.; and "The Telephone Call: The Direct Line From Teacher to Family" by Lassar G. Gotkin, Young Children, Dec., 1968, 4 pp.

TASK II
Part A is designed to enable users to identify situations and opening statements that are most likely to initiate rapport. Optional activities include reading the attachment, "Getting Ready for Parent-Teacher Conferences" by Dorothy Graves, P.T.A. Magazine, Sept. 1968, 2pp., listing opening statements that encourage rapport and either observing or listening to a tape of a parent-teacher conference.

Part B discusses seven different kinds of questions (e.g., open, indirect, rhetorical) and how each tends to open or close communication. Optional activities are to read either the article by Dorothy Graves or the fourth appended one, "A Beginning Teacher works with Parents" by Susan L. Bromberg, Young Children, Dec. 1968, 5 pp. After the reading, the user compiles a list of questions that open communication and practices using them with friends or in role play.

Part C is designed to enable users to identify the hazards of advice giving. Also, the user will be able to distinguish between opinions based on feelings or on professional judgement and experience.

TASK III consists of five role plays (from which a user chooses two to enact, with a partner), the application of learned knowledge of principles of successful conferencing and questioning techniques. Optional activities are to videotape or audiotape enactments to look for eye contact and distracting mannerisms and to tabulate the number of open and closed questions.

3.0 ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES INVOLVED IN USE OF PRODUCT

3.1 Description of main in-service activities:

User takes the pre-assessment and--depending on results--proceeds to either Task I, II or III. In addition to reading and taking tests, the user works with a partner in role play situations and may choose to engage in optional activities such as drafting specific lists (see 2.0), audio or videtaping role plays and observing or listening to tapes of conferences.

3.2 Help given in use of product:

All the prescribed information, instruction and testing strategies are contained in the product. A supervisor would provide additional support to that given by the required partner.

4.0 EVALUATION OF TEACHER INSERVICE LEARNING

The nature of the programmed text is to interplay small units of instruction with assessments. At all times, as s/he progresses through the course, the user is informed of the precise degree of his mastery. A post-assessment is orally administered by a supervisor. Tasks are to mark eight statements true or false, mark the items in each of four pairs of sentences that would best open communication, and demonstrate competence in conferencing by role playing with a partner.

5.0 ORDERING INFORMATION

5.1 Resources required/recommended:

About ten hours are required over a period of several weeks. It is recommended that the user engage in all of the optional activities because they stress learning through direct experience and with at least one other person. Audio and video equipment are needed, if user opts for activities which call for these. A supervisor is needed for guidance and support.

5.2 Distributor name/address:

Office of Field Services
Western Washington State College
Department of Education
Bellingham, Washington 98225
(206) 676-3090
Attn: Dr. Howard Evans

5.3 Components/approximate costs:

Component	Purchase	Rental	No. Req.	Reusable
#32 Booklet (32 pp)	$1.00	No	1	yes

"Face to Face in the Parent-Teacher Conference" xeroxed article, 7 pp.

"The Telephone Call: the Direct Line from Teacher to Faculty", xeroxed article, 3 pp.

"Getting Ready for a Parent-Teacher Conference", xeroxed article, 5 pp.

"A Beginning Teacher Works with Parents", xeroxed article, 5 pp.

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6.0 HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Identification of the developer:

Marilyn Werner, possibly either a cooperating teacher in South Seattle public schools or an adjunct supervisor to the Western Washington State College pre-service teacher education program, was the principal developer of this product.

6.2 How developed and when:

This instructional model was produced thru a grant from USOE to the Seattle Public Schools and Western Washington State College.

A Design Team reviewed the available literature on inservice education. The Design Team prepared a set of "principles for effective inservice education," gleaned from the literature. A panel of consultants reviewed the list and recommended revisions. The Design Team developed a tentative model for effective inservice education based on the revised principles. The panel of consultants also reviewed this model. The materials were analyzed both as to content and feasibility for local implementation by ten directors of Teacher Corps Projects. The period of development took place between 1967-69.

6.3 Evidence of effectiveness with users:

The revised materials were tested by 30 elementary teachers, the staff of one elementary school. The teachers simulated the steps through which a local faculty would proceed. Final revisions were made in the documents.

C. DESCRIBER CRITIQUE

Appropriateness / adaptability / technical quality:

The product informs the user about techniques of successful conferencing. Optional activities -- readings, role plays, observation -- may best serve the learner's need to have direct personal experiences with the subject and which are practical applications of the programmed text. The diction throughout the text is not always precise. There are grammatical errors, and some of the sentences are illegible due to printing mishaps.

Content accuracy/social fairness/community acceptance issues:

The notion that the purpose of parent-teacher conferences is to maximally benefit the child is accurate. Also, the attention given to establishing open communication and good rapport corresponds with the assumption that people do their best when their personal feelings, needs and concerns are respected.

There is no evidence of racial or sex bias. Principles expressed are in common agreement with that of parents and teachers in most communities.

Overall summary/comment:

This is one way to learn about techniques for successful parent-teacher conferences. However, interpersonal communication -- <u>especially</u> when the focus is on one person's child -- is such a complex matter that "techniques" alone cannot control process or outcome. The user will probably spend years studying (formally and informally) and practicing the techniques as well as the art, of conferencing. One could infer from the product content and format, that successful conferencing is only a matter of learning certain concepts and terms. Some would disagree with this.